

**ANTHROPOLOGY**  
**Up - to - Date**  
—  
**GEORGE WINTER MITCHELL**



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# ANTHROPOLOGY

## Up - To - Date

By

GEORGE WINTER MITCHELL

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KINGSTON, CANADA



393198  
3.6.41

1918

THE STRATFORD COMPANY, Publishers  
BOSTON



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The STRATFORD CO., Publishers  
Boston, Mass.

The Alpine Press, Boston, Mass., U. S. A.



To the Savages of Africa, Polynesia, New Zealand, Australia and the Island of Borneo.

*“Humani nil a me alienum puto.”*

G. W. M.



## Preface.

Gentle Reader, if you wish to take the subject of Anthropology seriously, skip everything in this book but the foot-notes, and study all the works of the authors whom I have cited.

G. W. MITCHELL.

*Queen's University,  
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## CHAPTER I.

### Definition.

Anthropology is the science which studies man in his total history from the days before the foundation of the family when he hunted for his food in packs like the wolf, and when in his attempts at language he barked like a dog, bellowed like a bull, or bleated like a sheep. It follows him through all the stages of his development in language, institutions and laws, up to the very highest refinements of vocal and ethical culture, and it finds that even in the very latest stages some of the most primitive sounds and customs still survive. On the operatic stage of today, particularly in the Wagnerian operas, you may hear the bellowing of bull-necked tenors, who have evidently

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learnt their art in Bashan, and on the amateur concert stage, where art has not sufficiently disguised nature, the barking of the baritone, and the squealing and bleating of the soprano, are quite convincing proofs of survivals.

R. S. V. P.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. S. V. P. — Riez Si Vous Pouvez.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Founder of Anthropology.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica gives Dr. J. C. Prichard the credit of being the founder of modern anthropology and quotes from his *Natural History of Man*, which was written in 1843:—

“The organized world presents no contrasts and resemblances more remarkable than those which we discover on comparing mankind with the inferior tribes, etc.”

And in his appendix to *Myth, Ritual and Religion* Andrew Lang is inclined to ascribe to Fontenelle the origin of anthropology, or at least its method of investigating savage beliefs and customs for the elucidation of many things which we do not understand in the higher cultures. Fontenelle's essay *De l'Origine de Fables* is quoted as saying among

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other things that early men were in "a state of almost inconceivable savagery and ignorance" and that the Greek myths are inherited from people in that condition. "Look at the Kaffirs and the Iroquois if you wish to know what early men were like, and remember that even the Iroquois and the Kaffirs are people with a long past, with knowledge and culture which the first men did not enjoy".

But the palm must be given to Lucretius, who, without any direct knowledge of savage peoples, and with no books to refer to on the subject, did by sheer force of his imagination reach conclusions in regard to some beliefs and customs of primitive men, which have only recently been proved correct by actual investigation of savage life.

Many ponderous volumes with copious illustrations have been written by modern anthropologists to prove that savages learned to produce fire by the

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friction of wood. Still more ponderous volumes from every quarter of the globe prove that many primitive peoples have obtained their belief in spirits and gods from visions.

Lucretius told us all that in two short sentences more than nineteen hundred years ago.<sup>2</sup>

But after all Lucretius was only guessing, and if you take into account the method of Anthropology, which investigates and compares the manners and customs of all peoples, savage, barbaric and civilized, then Herodotus is the Father of Anthropology as he is also the Father of History. Some writers, but they are not up to date, assert that it is his reputation as the Father of Lies which entitles Herodotus to be hailed as the Father of Anthropology.

<sup>2</sup> Lucretius, "De Rerum Natura", Bk. V. In these foot-notes I do not cite the line or page. The whole book in every case should be carefully studied, as an extract wrested from its context is often misleading.

## CHAPTER III.

### Method.

In tracing man's language and customs back to primitive times we must be careful not to jump to the conclusion that because a certain word, custom, or institution has been derived from a certain source, it still preserves some of the characteristics of that source. A habit which is now bad may have had a perfectly good origin. Drunkenness is a bad habit, but it had a religious origin.<sup>3</sup> In former days the worshipper became intoxicated that he might dull the senses and set the spirit free to commune with the object of his adoration. Wine was supposed to induce a highly ecstatic frame of mind. It made you see things which you never could see

<sup>3</sup> "The Golden Bough", Vol. I, Edit. 1900.



when sober. This is why snakes<sup>4</sup> play such an important part in many of the ancient religions and this is why drunkenness dies so hard. It has its roots in religion. To take an illustration from language, two words may be derived from precisely the same source, yet one of them may have quite an innocent meaning, while the other may carry quite a naughty suggestion. For example the words correspondent and corespondent have precisely the same origin but they don't mean the same thing.

The Science of Anthropology assumes that man has a continuous development and that his customs, institutions and laws may therefore be traced through savagery and barbarism up to modern civilization.<sup>5</sup> But some anthropologists are not satisfied with going back to the point

<sup>4</sup> "The Golden Bough", Vol. II, Edit. 1900. E. B. Tylor's "Primitive Culture", Vol. II.

<sup>5</sup> E. B. Tylor's "Primitive Culture", Vol. I.

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where men have emerged from the brute stage. They maintain that we should push our enquiries back to the time when we actually were brutes. Otherwise, they say, you will not be able to account for certain stupid habits of the present day. For instance, when a man is being taught to swim for the first time, he insists upon spreading his fingers wide open. He has to be taught to close them. Why? Because we used to be web-fingered like the duck. All animal life, you should know, came originally from the water. Even Old Thales knew that.

The more conservative school, however, restrict investigation to man after he became man. In our endeavor then to discover the meaning or origin of our beliefs and customs we anthropologists make a special study of the beliefs and customs of savages all the world over, for of

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course they are the most primitive living data for investigating primitive ideas. If you want to show that primitive man believed that the moon is made of green cheese, you make the rounds of different savage tribes, preferably in Australia, and ask them if they believe the moon is made of green cheese. Sooner or later you will get an affirmative reply. And you establish the point beyond question if you get somebody else, preferably a minister, to extract the same answer from a savage in Africa, or the island of Borneo.

Savages can teach us a lot, but in gathering information from them in regard to their beliefs and practices you have to be very careful. They hate to be bothered with questions and sometimes they will say very queer things to get rid of you. To illustrate the danger of collecting evidence from savages when you are not

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thoroughly acquainted with their language, I cite the experience of a certain French explorer who was questioning the Tonga Islanders in regard to their knowledge of arithmetic. It seems that the Tonga Islanders have numbers up to 100000, which is quite remarkable for savages. But the Frenchman was bent on proving that they could do much better. He succeeded in raising the ante to 1000 billions and the names for these numbers were duly printed. Later investigation showed that the benighted savages had palmed off a lot of nasty words, too indecent to print even in French.\*

For many years anthropology confined its investigations almost entirely to savages, but the up-to-date anthropologist is now applying what he has learned to civilization, both ancient and modern. Many classical

\* E. B. Tylor's "Primitive Culture", Vol. I.

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stories and myths are now much more intelligible and much less horrible. Take the story of the Cyclops in the Odyssey with its revolting details about digging out the eye of Polyphemus. We now know that this was nothing but an innocent game of Blind Man's Buff.

The character of Zeus too is being gradually whitewashed. "The Christian Fathers" says Andrew Lang, "calculated that he sowed his wild oats and persecuted mortal women with his affections through seventeen generations of men". But the Christian Fathers were very uncharitable. Almost all the scandalous stories about Zeus can be satisfactorily explained by anthropology. To take one of many, there is the story of his visit to Danae in the form of a shower of gold. That means nothing more than a shower of rain coming down to fert-

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ilize the earth.' You will find the proof of this in my chapter on Magic.

The festival of the Lupercalia, one of the most ancient Roman festivals, was celebrated every year in honour of Lupercus, the god, be it noticed, of fertility.

The priests assembled on the day of the festival and sacrificed goats to the god. After the sacrifice was over they cut the skins of the goats, which they had sacrificed, into pieces, with some of which they covered parts of their bodies in imitation of the god Lupercus. The other pieces of the skins they cut into thongs and holding them in their hands they ran through the streets of the city, striking with them everybody whom they met, and especially women, who even used to come forward voluntarily for that purpose, since they believed that this ceremony rendered them fruitful.

<sup>7</sup> Salomon Reinach's "Orpheus".



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The meaning of the ceremony had long been forgotten, but it was a survival of contagious magic. The fecundity of the animal recently sacrificed was supposed to pass into the women, through the thongs made of its skin.

At Sparta boys were mercilessly scourged. Frequently they died under the lash without betraying their suffering by look or moan. The reason given by the Spartans themselves for this castigation was that it taught the boys endurance. But the original meaning of the ceremony is to be found in contagious magic. The strength or vitality of the tree from which the rods were made was believed to pass into the boys.

In our own day, the old-fashioned schoolmaster thrashed his boys with a cane. How much more pleasant our school days would have been if the master had only known some anthro-

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pology! Ignorantly believing that the cane was meant to inflict pain, he applied it most vigorously. Had he only known that he was really practising contagious magic, he would have used it more gently.

The up-to-date parent has discarded these old and brutal methods of bringing up children. Children are now inoculated with candy, which by sympathetic magic sweetens their character and renders them amenable to discipline.

To test the method of getting evidence by firing questions at all and sundry, I once made a systematic canvass to find out what meaning people attached to the Holy Ghost. I interrogated an eminent divine, a celebrated lawyer, a highly successful physician, and a clerk of a first-class hotel. To my question "What do you understand by the Holy Ghost?" the divine replied: "A sort of emanation

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from the Supreme Being.” The lawyer’s answer was: “Ahem. I’ll look it up and give you my opinion tomorrow”, and the physician said: “Why, really, I don’t think I ever thought just what I did think about it.” The reply of the hotel clerk was brief, but quite as satisfactory as the others. He said: “Rats!”

## CHAPTER IV.

### Magic.

The primitive savage believes that things which were once in contact retain their connection after they have been separated, and whatever may happen to one, the other will be similarly affected.<sup>s</sup> If an enemy can obtain a hair of your head, he can cause your body to frizzle up by putting your hair in the fire. This is the reason why a certain king in the Hawaiian Islands is attended by a K. C. S. — Knight Commander of the Spittoon. This official precedes his majesty, holding a spittoon into which his royal master expectorates, and every night the contents are carefully buried, so that no enemy may obtain

<sup>s</sup> Dr. A. C. Haddon's "Magic and Fetishism", in the Series, "Religious Ancient and Modern". Better read the whole Series.

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them and work magic on his royal person. In passing, we should note that such a custom when widely practised prevents the spread of tuberculosis among these ignorant heathen.

Instances of the practice of magic survive to the present day. The baseball pitcher goes through a number of extraordinary contortions like the movements of St. Vitus' Dance and the Highland Fling commingled. Why? His idea is to impart to the ball a motion so peculiar that the batter will not be able to hit it.

Another common belief among savage peoples is that whatever is taken into the body transfers its characteristics to the body. Thus in the island of Borneo it is forbidden to eat deer because the act would cause timidity.<sup>o</sup> If you want to be courageous, eat something that was courageous. This is why the Germans eat sausages.

<sup>o</sup> Hose and McDougall's 'Pagan Tribes of Borneo'.

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Of course they are careful to make them of the proper sort of dog. The English bull-dog is a great favorite since the beginning of the war.

By a further process of reasoning the savage argues that by taking into the system a little of what is injurious he may ward off a greater evil. It is the homeopathic doctrine *similia similibus curantur* and explains why calves' head and brain sauce is a favorite dish with many.

This is the principle underlying our system of pair marriage. A man takes one woman to wife for fear of the rest of the sex tearing him to pieces, literally or metaphorically, according to the stage of society in which he lives. Thus marriage was originally a sort of inoculation against the fury of a woman scorned. This, too, is the explanation of our mother-in-law jokes. Underneath all our jesting there is the substratum of



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fact. Man first married from fear and while he partially succeeded in disarming the wife by marrying her, he still feels a decided antipathy to his wife's nearest female relative.

Hence too, as a great misfortune may be warded off by inflicting a slight one, old boots are thrown at a bride and groom to ensure them a happy life in the future by doing them a little wrong in the present. By feigning to injure the newly wedded ones you anticipate that bad luck which is sure to come upon such consummate bliss. You avert, in short, the jealousy of the gods.

The science of biology has established the similarity of man's physical body to that of certain animals. Anthropology has traced many of our mental characteristics to the same source. The notion set forth above, that an object can be influenced through that which was once in con-

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tact with it, is found in the lower animals. Thus, if a man is chased by a bull and throws away his coat to facilitate his escape, the bull will gore and toss the coat, if he cannot get the man. No doubt this action on the part of the bull is quite unreasoned, but the passing from such instinctive action to a reasoned mode of procedure is precisely what makes the difference between man and brute.

## CHAPTER V.

### Rain-Making.

Another form of magic called imitative magic is founded on the belief that the desired result can be produced by imitating it. A common method adopted by the magician in producing rain is to pour water over himself, or some member of his tribe.<sup>1</sup> This is why the shower-bath is not popular with Scotch farmers. There is always quite enough rain in Scotland without resorting to disagreeable magic to bring it on.

Some people think it very silly reasoning on the part of the savage to imagine he can influence nature by imitative magic. But the savage is not quite so silly as might at first appear. The results which he tries to

<sup>1</sup> "The Golden Bough", Vol. I, Edit. 1900.

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bring about are, as far as I can find out, always possible. Rain will doubtless come sooner or later, after he has practised his imitative magic. But he seems to be too acute to attempt the building of a canoe by any such means, because he knows very well the result will not be achieved, no matter how long he waits.

Nor is the savage to be considered silly because he keeps on with his imitative magic, even when he never succeeds in bringing about the desired result. Civilized people keep up the practice of praying for all sorts of things, even though their prayers may never be answered.

Closely allied to these ideas is the belief in charms and amulets. Savages wear all sorts of things about their necks to ward off misfortunes. In modern society some people wear a necktie to cover up a dirty shirt, but such was not its original use. It

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is primarily of the same nature as a charm. The necktie first came to be worn in the days when men were hung for very trifling offences. By wearing a piece of rope about the neck a man warded off death by hanging in making this slight concession to the hangman. This is the history of the four-in-hand. As society advanced in culture the necktie was formed to imitate a butterfly. This is the style used by male dancers in evening clothes, and by coercive magic it induces the necessary lightness of foot required for the modern ball-room.

In the confused reasoning of the savage mind this imitative magic could work in two ways. At the stage in which he came first to believe in spirits he thought that by imitating rain he constrained the gods to send rain. But in sending rain the gods themselves in turn are imitating his performance. And so the gods come

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to imitate him when he is engaged in scandalous performances not meant for heavenly imitation. This is one of the methods by which anthropologists explain the conduct of the heathen gods which the Christian Fathers so much decried.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Names.

Not only is there a common belief among primitive peoples that the body can be worked upon through anything that has been in contact with it, but just as universal is the belief that even the name of a person can be used to work magic upon. Hence comes the practice of writing the name of an enemy on a piece of wood and driving nails into it. For this reason a name is often carefully concealed, lest an enemy should work black magic upon it. It is said that Roma was not the real name of the capital of ancient Italy. Its real name has been kept so secret that nobody knows what it was. A distinguished anthropologist suggests that you get it by reading the letters back-

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wards — Amor, Love, a name suggested by the tradition that Venus was the mother of Aeneas.

So important was the name considered that it became a sort of fetish. Even today some words are fetishes, for example, democracy. Nobody knows precisely what it now stands for. But everybody uses it and everybody has a different notion in regard to its meaning. Political orators dangle it before their constituents as a sort of charm to win popularity. No one is bold enough to criticise it with the same sincerity as he would criticise aristocracy, oligarchy, plutocracy, or despotism.



## CHAPTER VII.

# The Origin of Magic.

Imitative magic explains many things no doubt, but it is not quite satisfactory to say that the savage believes that he can get a desired result by imitating it. A science which professes to get at the origin of things should explain *how* the savage comes to believe that he can get the desired result by imitating it. In short, one wants to know the origin of imitative magic itself. Herbert Spencer<sup>2</sup> says that, "guidance by custom, which we everywhere find amongst rude peoples, is the sole conceivable guidance at the outset." I suppose it was this sort of reasoning that prompted Carlyle to call him "an immeasurable ass." How could cus-

<sup>2</sup> "Princ. of Sociology", Sec. 529.

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tom be the sole guidance of primitive man at the outset? Custom implies that a thing has been practised for a considerable time. It would be more reasonable to say that guidance by *instinct* is the sole conceivable guidance at the outset. If we accept the law of evolution with all that it implies, inchoate man, that is man as he is just emerging from the brute stage, must have been guided in all his actions by instinct.\*

In his struggle for existence, the only help he could get besides his instincts lay in imitation, and only three sources of imitation lay open to him, namely, imitation of animals, imitation of nature and imitation of his own kind. From imitation of animals he learnt many things, vocal culture as we have seen for one. From imitation of his own kind he would not learn much, for his own kind were as

\* W. G. Sumner's "Folkways".

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ignorant as himself. There remained only imitation of natural forces. To that he turned in desperation, not necessarily because he *believed* in it, but simply because it was the only thing left for him to try. So if he needed rain, he imitated rain and, as the rain sometimes came, he was fooled into believing that he was the cause of it. You will find quite as bad logic among civilized people. It is no worse than the reasoning of Herbert Spencer as exemplified at the beginning of this chapter.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### The Social Unit.

Many of the lower animals have a social unit. If a wolf, for example, when separated by accident from the pack to which it belongs, brings down its prey, what does it do? It may of course, like many other animals under stress of hunger, become for the nonce a hog and eat the whole thing itself, but such is not its habit. As a rule it sends forth a cry of invitation for the rest of the pack to come and share its good fortune. There is no mistaking this cry. It is a dulcet tone quite different from the ordinary howl of starvation which the casual hunter knows.

Crows will post a sentinel at some point of vantage before swooping down on their prey and if the sentinel

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fails to give warning at the approach of a hunter or other danger, those of the flock who have not been killed will tear the sentinel to pieces. From these two instances two conclusions may be drawn. Firstly, some animals form a social unit, and secondly, they do so in their quest for food.

Now at that point in his development when man had just emerged from the brute stage his sole business, the only thing that concerned him, was the quest for food. From animals more than from any other source he learnt how to procure it. Watching birds dive for fish suggested the art of spearing. From different animals he learned different tricks. As a rule each animal has only one good trick. Man was capable of learning the whole bag of tricks and so was able to make more rapid progress than the other brutes. It is just this capacity, the capacity to imitate almost any-

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thing he saw which differentiated him from the other animals. At this stage, I mean the stage when he is learning to fill his bag of tricks, he has no name, but he has already formed like many other less intelligent animals a social unit, which for want of a more distinctive term we shall call a pack. As time went on each pack called itself by the name of the animal that had taught it its best trick for getting its staple food. If a pack could find little to live on but fish, it identified itself with the bird that taught it to spear. Both bird and man became, so to speak, birds of a feather. Once the custom was established of taking a name from an animal, men named themselves, or perhaps even nicknamed others after all sorts of animals and extended the practice to anything eatable, after the reason for adopting the name of an animal was

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forgotten. Thus arose the practice of Totemism.<sup>4</sup>

As yet the family is not the bond of union. That comes next, when men are beyond the purely hunting stage and have advanced to the pastoral and agricultural stage. Here there is need of a greater division of labour. So the family, which may embrace several generations, is formed, then a union of families into clans, next the city-state, and lastly the nation as we know it. Thus the whole fabric of civilization is built upon the stomach. Whether an enduring Empire or a World State can be built on this foundation is extremely doubtful.

Certain species of animals then are capable of forming a social unit to assist one another in the quest for food. Some lovers of animals go so far as

<sup>4</sup> E. B. Tylor's "Primitive Culture", Vol. I. For a full discussion of Totemism see "Totemism and Exogamy", by J. G. Frazer and "The Secret of the Totem", by Andrew Lang.

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to maintain that their pets not only have a language in which they speak to each other but that they also understand the language of men. They cite the fact that a cat will come to you when you call "puss" and that a horse will make the correct response when you shout "back up". But you can teach a cat to run away when you call "puss" and a horse to go forward when you shout "back up". These animals have learnt to obey your command in the first place simply by associating certain sounds with corresponding signals on your part. This is proved by the conduct of certain cats in a Spanish monastery. The well-known Spanish way of calling a cat is *miz, miz!* while *zape, zape!* is used to drive it away. Now in a certain monastery in Spain where they kept very handsome cats, the brother in charge of the refectory hit upon the device of calling *zape, zape!*



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to them when he gave them their food, and then he drove them away with a stick crying angrily *miz, miz*; and this of course prevented any stranger from calling and stealing them for only he and the cats knew the secret.

There seems however to be little doubt that man learnt language in the first place from the sounds made by animals or infants. Indeed quite a strong argument may be built upon this supposition for the Roman method of pronouncing Latin. To take one instance out of many. *Ab uno disce omnes* as Vergil says. The Latin verb *vagio* means to caterwaul like an infant. Now an infant cannot pronounce *v*. The squall of an infant is represented by *wa*. Therefore *v* was pronounced in Latin like a *w*.

## CHAPTER IX.

### The Origin of Exogamy.

Exogamy is the practice of marrying only outside of one's own clan, tribe or social group. Its effect is to prevent the marriage of near kin, especially brothers with sisters and parents with children. Among certain tribes of central Australia<sup>5</sup> it is found in its earliest form. The tribe is divided into two groups only and an individual must choose a mate from the group to which he does not belong. As children belong to the mother's group, this division of the tribe prevents the marriage of brothers and sisters. As this is the most primitive sort of exogamy it is the only one that need be considered in

<sup>5</sup> Spencer and Gillen's "The Native Tribes of Central Australia".

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settling the question of origin. The question then simply stated is. Why had primitive people an objection to the mating of brothers and sisters? Some say it is for the purpose of preventing the evils arising from inbreeding. But this is much too scientific an idea to ascribe to the lowest known type of savages in existence. Besides, Spencer and Gillan assert that they are not even aware of any connection between mating and birth. Nor is it satisfactory to say that they have learnt the practice from the lower animals, as they have learnt so many other things to help them in their struggle for existence. They did not learn the practice from the lower animals. Both animals and man practised exogamy from instinct. For proof of animal instinct in regard to mating I submit the following from Dr. William J. Long:

“Allowing for mistakes of infer-

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ence the following facts seem to me significant:

1. Among higher orders of wild animals, chastity is the rule. Males and females live together or near each other usually, and except at the time of rut there is no sexual intercourse and no attempt at sexual intercourse. I say this confidently, for I have watched thousands of animals at all times and know their habits.

2. When the time of rut draws near, all family groups of wild animals (at least all I have studied) break up and scatter. The males especially wander widely and get mates from other family groups. If a young male bear for instance, stays near the mother, he is cuffed and beaten away. The same is true of other animals. I have seen it so often that I cannot doubt its meaning.

3. The female white-tailed deer almost invariably keeps her female

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fawns with her during the winter. Occasionally also she keeps a male fawn, or rather he stays with her, or near her, until the rut in late autumn. When the rut is on, the female fawns are still near the mother and remain with her during the deep snows. These female fawns stay with or near the mother until the next autumn when they first rut. So you will very often find a female yearling with the old doe and her new fawn. But you will never find a yearling buck with his mother and her new fawns. The young bucks apparently leave the mother; they are not driven away. I have observed deer families often; and I *infer* that the buck feels the instinct to leave and search for other females, just as the doe feels the instinct for males not of her own family.

4. The wolves tell me exactly the same story. I have followed their

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trails for weeks at a time before and during the rut and am positive that when the time to mate arrives, the family group or pack breaks up and the males seek females in other family groups."

So far, then, as a trained intelligence can discover anything from observation, some animals are born with an instinct against the union of brother and sister. The hypothesis that man is born with the same instinct is only a hypothesis, but then the theory of evolution itself is only a hypothesis. Absolute proof in either case is impossible.

## CHAPTER X.

### Anthropomorphic Gods.

How man came to conceive of gods in his own image is commonly explained in four ways.<sup>6</sup>

(1) Trances, swoons, sleep, seem in themselves to suggest to ignorant observers the existence of doubles, that is, of beings dwelling within the body, animating it, and able to absent themselves from it for a time or permanently.

(2) Apparitions of persons still living or dead appearing to men while asleep seem also sufficient to lead to a belief in ghosts and survival after death.

(3) The third source of belief in unseen personal agents is the spon-

<sup>6</sup> James H. Leuba's "The Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion".

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taneous personification of striking natural phenomena.

(4) The necessity of a Maker is said to be borne in upon the savage at a very early time. Those who hold this view simply assert that the form under which the Creator is imagined is, of course, derived from the beings with which his senses have made the savage familiar.

These explanations may all be satisfactory enough of the manner in which savages came to believe in ghosts or spirits, but they do not explain how he turned his ghosts into gods formed like himself, and explanation No. 4 simply begs the question.

The true explanation is that the savage arrived at the notion of a god in his own image in a practical way just as he worked out other things in adapting means to ends.

Everybody is agreed that previous to the stage of anthropomorphism



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man attributed powers greater than his own to inanimate objects in which a vague formless spirit, as yet indefinable, was supposed to lodge. Now let us put ourselves in the place of the savage and let us take an object, say the stump of a tree, which has been blasted with lightning, as the object in which resides the Power which we do not formulate or understand, but which we wish to influence. We ask this Power to help us and he doesn't comply. Why not? He cannot have heard our request. So we bore a hole in each side of the stump that our voice may the better reach the spirit in the interior. These holes after a time come to be spoken of as ears. When we offer the spirit a drink, as we would to a friend to put him in a good humour, he doesn't see it. We put a couple of holes in the front so that the spirit within will be able to look through them and see the

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spirit without. The stump has now got ears to hear and eyes to see and so the process goes on until gradually we have got a rough figure of a man. Then and not till then the savage conceives of the power inside as formed like a man. This explains why the statues held in most reverence in ancient religions were hideous formless things. Sometimes the finished product resembled one of the lower animals more than it did man. This gave rise to animal worship. Sometimes one part would look like a man and the other part like an animal. Hence arose animal-headed deities like the Egyptian Bastet, who had the head of a cat.

The cat is the most ancient sacred animal known to man. It was the most sacred animal among the Egyptians and for centuries it was unknown in Europe. At Pompeii archaeologists have discovered proofs that

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almost every other kind of animal was known in Europe but there is no trace of the cat.<sup>7</sup> Not until Egyptian Paganism was swept away and Christianity was able to import cats to Europe were we blessed with that harmless necessary animal. For these reasons we particularly abhor the idea of eating cats, firstly because they are the most ancient sacred animal and secondly because they represent the triumph of Christianity over Paganism.

<sup>7</sup> Salomon Reinach's "Cultes, Mythes et Religions".

## CHAPTER XI.

### Religion.

Savages are sometimes referred to as worshippers of stocks and stones, but there is no satisfactory proof that worship has ever been paid to stocks and stones as such. There is always connected with the stock or stone an idea of a Power or Spirit. No doubt individual savages have been found who are below even the very low average of their community, and in whom the idea of Spirit is very vague indeed. Mentally such individuals have not advanced much beyond the animal stage, but even a dog begs only from a living thing. He will get on his hind legs and beg from a man but you will never find a dog making supplication to a suspended ham.

All savages then, of whom we have any definite knowledge, worship a

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Power outside of themselves, something non-material, or at least not so grossly material as a solid body, more or less vaguely conceived, for which their language may have no satisfactory name. Even the Ancient Greeks, in attempting to express the idea of soul, called it *Psyche*, which is the word for a butterfly.

In our explanation of the evolution of a god we took a tree as an example of one of the objects which the savage developed into a god. But in selecting a tree his choice was determined by the belief that it had exhibited Power and that too of a non-material sort. A tree that had been struck by lightning suggested the idea that the tree contained the Power of making fire, a Power which he himself did not at first possess, and acquired only after painful experience. Hence then is developed in his mind belief in and reverence for a Power external to and

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greater than himself. Thus creed is begotten. Ritual followed when the savage made a request or presented an offering to the Power in the Stump. The growth of the Stump into a god stimulated the imagination and enriched his whole life. Thus whatever else religion may be it is, as Professor Watson has pointed out in the *Philosophical Basis of Religion*, a life, a creed, and a ritual, and it is all these explicitly or implicitly in the lowest savages of whom we have any knowledge.

I do not put this forward as a definition of religion. A definition like Formal Logic adds nothing new to your store of knowledge. If you doubt that, look up your dictionary for the definition of a cow. My dictionary says a cow is "the female of the bovine animals". If you did not know a cow from previous experience you certainly would not recognize it from the definition.

## CHAPTER XII.

### Cannibalism.

Of cannibalism we have today a great horror. Among civilized peoples the practice is so revolting that it has not been considered necessary to frame any laws, civil or ecclesiastical, against it. So far as the law is concerned a man may eat his own son instead of burying him if he so chooses. Among many savages it was a religious duty or a mark of affection to eat a relative. And in primitive days, just because man could eat man, our species survived while so many other species of animal have become extinct. In seasons of drought and famine, when other food could not be procured, man got over hard times by eating his own kind. Many species of the lower animals, which

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were too squeamish to follow man's example, died of starvation. This is what is known as the law of the survival of the fittest.

Of course once man developed a taste for man, he could not easily give up the practice of cannibalism, and while many savage tribes progressed so far as to refrain from eating their own kind, yet they had no objection to missionaries. Missionaries they regarded as a godsend. They seized and cooked any that landed on their shores. Naturally the missionary resisted. In spite of his struggles he became the principal dish at the next meal. Hence the origin of the term *pièce de resistance*. After the repast it was the custom to use the charred bones of the victim for legs of chairs and tables. The mission furniture of civilized society derived its name from this savage custom.



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And yet cannibalism after all is not so revolting a practice if it is recognized that its origin lay in sacrificing a human victim to the gods.<sup>8</sup> Man began by giving his best to the gods. At first the king or priest was sacrificed, and as he was often thought to be deity incarnate he was eaten by the worshippers in the belief that by doing so they became permeated with the divine spirit. Later an animal, such as a bull, was substituted. Bulls came to be regarded as too expensive and a goat or pig was sacrificed.

Man became more niggardly still and fashioned a piece of dough<sup>9</sup> to represent the victim and finally they did not even take the trouble to fashion the dough in any image.

<sup>8</sup> W. Robertson Smith's "The Religion of the Semites".  
W. G. Sumner's "Folkways".

<sup>9</sup> "The Golden Bough", Vol. II, page 337, Edit. 1900.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### The Power of Suggestion.

In working his magic the medicine man often reinforces his art by the power of suggestion. He gets a kind friend to tell the victim that a hair of his head or a bit of his clothing is under treatment and this knowledge so works upon the poor wretch's mind that he almost invariably succumbs. Today the civilized physician is making use of this power of suggestion for curative purposes. When a doctor is called in, to attend a sick child, he very often finds nothing particularly the matter with it, but he leaves a bottle for the child, cures the anxiety in the mother's mind and sends in his bill to the father.

Surgeons, too, rely to a great extent upon the power of suggestion. If

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you have a pain in the right iliac, they place you on the operating table and though they find nothing the matter, you get better — sometimes, because you think they have cut away the offending member. I should perhaps explain to the uninitiated that the iliac is not an epic poem by Homer. It is that part of your anatomy in which reposes the golden egg called by surgeons the *appendix vermiciformis*, and alas! the goose of golden egg reputation is often killed.

While it is true that the physician of today is taking a leaf out of the medicine man's book in making use of the power of suggestion, yet it must not be supposed that his art as a physician was developed from the practices of the medicine man. That supposition is quite false although it is adopted by Herbert Spencer. The medicine man believed that evil spirits were the sole cause of disease.

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He sought therefore to cure by exorcism only. The old women of the tribe, however, while their men folk were engaged in war or the chase roamed the woods for healing herbs wherewith to cure their sick. It is from those old wives that the modern physician is developed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Kings and Priests.

Many anthropologists claim that the medicine man of the primitive savage made use of his great power to make himself king as well as chief priest and the chief priest in many cases was thought to be the deity incarnate. Thus the divine right of kings became early established. But after a time the king delegated his power as priest to one of his dutiful subjects. This was good policy, because when men grew in wisdom they observed that the priest's magic was not always successful. Thus the king avoided loss of prestige by shifting the blame to one of his lieges, which is a way kings have. As we have just observed, magic did not always succeed. So just as the king got

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rid of his responsibility by delegating his powers as magician or priest to the medicine man, so the medicine man in his turn handed on the responsibility to the Lord. He taught the benighted folk to ask the Lord, or Zeus, or whatever name he happened to go by at the time, to send rain, or whatever else they might want. This is the origin of prayer. And of course as the medicine man never did anything without a fee, it could not be expected that the Lord would send rain for nothing. Hence arose the custom of passing round the plate, which is a substitute for the medicine man's hat.

## CHAPTER XV.

### Marriage and the Gentler Sex.

In Ancient Rome departed souls were regarded as spirits and worshipped. They were looked upon with great dread. There was a certain hole in the ground by which these spirits came up from the lower world, and a stone called the *Lapis Manalis* was placed over the hole to keep them down. And the name *Di Manes* the *good* gods, was given to placate them. This is why you are addressed as "Gentle Reader" in the Preface, which see, if you haven't seen it already. On the same principle men today call women the gentler sex, although they know very well that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male." N. B. The *lapis manalis* mentioned above is not to be

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confused with another *lapis manalis* which was used in imitative magic to procure rain by pouring water over it. The word *manalis* in this case is derived not from *manes* but from *manare*, to flow. I mention this just to show that I am up-to-date in order that I may gain credence for other statements which I have not time to prove.

In a former chapter reference was made to our system of pair marriage and one reason was advanced for its origin. But anthropologists of an economic turn of mind put forward another explanation. They maintain that the food supply regulated the marriage customs. When the food supply was abundant and it was easy to support many wives, polygamy flourished. When the food supply was very scanty polyandry was the rule. Pair marriage is the happy medium no doubt and while it is the best



that has yet been tried it is not free from objections. It falsely assumes that every woman can find a mate and that every man can afford a wife, and in doing so unsexes a vast proportion of the human race. If a change in our marriage customs arises it will come neither from philosophy, nor from religion. It is to economic conditions principally that we must look. It is hard to predict what form the change will take with a large increase of wealth under the domination of a plutocratic class. It should be remembered too that our present custom of pair marriage is individualistic and is the greatest bulwark against socialism. And so firmly is it established that socialism does not dare to attack it openly. But if socialism should undermine it from beneath and plutocracy crush it from above, a change of some kind is inevitable. Even as things are, the

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principle is not absolute, for a compromise is possible through divorce and morganatic marriages. When once the change, whatever it be, is effected and becomes universal, philosophy will find it rational and religion will pronounce it right.

The feeling that departed spirits are regarded with dread and their return to this world considered undesirable is evident from the Roman practice of carrying out the dead with the feet first in the belief that the spirits will not be able to find their way back. This feeling survives today. In a recent issue of a certain newspaper a correspondent complained that the roads leading to the cemetery were in very bad condition. "These roads ought to be kept in good order," said the writer, whose wife by the way lay at the point of death, "so that the departed may be taken to the cemetery in safety!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

### Dress.

Anthropology finds that dress has nothing to do with decency or modesty.<sup>1</sup> Many savages go about clad only in their native atmosphere and are very decent and modest notwithstanding. The evening dress of our women greatly shocks orientals and our women would be greatly shocked if a man appeared at afternoon tea in a bathing suit. It is all a matter of use and wont, time and place.

The notion that ideas and words referring to procreation are indecent is modern. In Ancient Greece such ideas and words were treated as any others or they were regarded as comic. Nowadays some people are afraid to mention the word "leg" in

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Sumner's "Folkways".

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a mixed audience and insist on substituting "limb". The height of absurdity is reached in the case of the old maid who draped the legs of her piano, tables, and chairs.

Some anthropologists claim that the custom of raising the hat arose from the fact that originally only bigwigs like Kings, Popes and Cardinals were allowed to wear hats or crowns, while slaves and serfs went bare-headed. Later when common folk became privileged to wear hats they had to remove them in the presence of the afore-mentioned bigwigs. Finally, removing the hat became customary for all whenever one man wished to show respect to another.<sup>2</sup>

Not so far-fetched, however, is the explanation that the custom arose at a time when all men were thieves and the reason for removing your hat when passing another man was sim-

<sup>2</sup> S. Baring Gould's "Strange Survivals".

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ply that the hat being the only part of your clothing which is not fastened to your person, you had to hold on to it if you did not want it stolen. That this is the true explanation is the more apparent when you note that women do not raise their hats in salutation for the very sufficient reason that there is no need, since they are fastened to their persons with pins like any other part of their clothing.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### Cookery.

Why are dinner plates round and not square? Because the plate, you must know, is a survival of the solar wheel, which is the symbol of the sun-god.<sup>3</sup> And the sun-god was the god, *par excellence*, of fertility, who in conjunction with mother earth produces everything you eat, both animal and vegetable. Originally an ox or other animal was sacrificed on a wheel and parts of the victim were distributed among the worshippers. By a later refinement plates were constructed circular in shape like the solar wheel, and the material used was earthenware out of deference to Father Sun and Mother Earth respectively.

The sacrificial victim is now prop-

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Cook's "Zeus", Vol. I.

erly cooked and decently distributed at a table with a white cloth on it, which was originally the robe of the officiating priest.

Speaking of Father Sun and Mother Earth, it might be appropriate to explain that herein lies the mystery attached to the number three. Father Sun is one, Mother Earth is two and Everything Else is Three. By that Trinity the Universe is accounted for.

When a fowl is being dressed why does the careful housewife remove the gall-bag? Today we say that if the gall were not removed it would spoil the taste of the fowl. But this is not the original reason. For the original reason you must go back to the worship of Hera among the Ancient Greeks. Hera was a goddess who presided over marriage and in her ritual the gall was extracted from the sacrificial victim in order that the married couple might live together

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without bitterness, it being naturally assumed that bitterness would certainly develop between them unless divine intervention were procured. Nothing is clearer from a study of primitive society than the fact that the sexes are naturally antipathetic.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

# Wedding Rings, Church Bells, National Flags.

In the marriage service the man gives the woman a ring as he utters the words: "With all my worldly goods I thee endow." Three things require elucidation. Why is a ring given? Why is only one ring given? Why does the man not wear a wedding ring? First then, why a ring? Anthropologists are divided on this question. One theory is that the ring, being a circle, that is, a thing that has no beginning and no end, is a symbol of immortality and that in the marriage service the man gives it to the woman as a symbol of his undying love. Another theory is that the ring, being a circle like the equator, which embraces the earth, is symbolic of the

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earth itself and therefore when the man gives the woman the ring, he is symbolically giving her the earth, believing that she will be satisfied with nothing less.

Why only one ring? No doubt economy has something to do with it especially when we remember that polygamy preceded pair marriage. Obviously one ring for each wife would be about as much expense as a man could stand. Obviously too, the reason why the man did not wear a ring instead of the woman was that he could not get them all on, if for example he married as many wives as Solomon.

What is the meaning of the barber's pole with its stripes of white and red? In the days when bleeding was the cure for everything the barber was also the surgeon and the white stripe represented a white bandage and the

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red of course indicated blood.<sup>4</sup> The sign is still appropriate. The red still represents blood and the white stands for lather.

Where you have a blue stripe as well as a red and white, it is a concession to the aristocratic customer. Next!

And why have so many national flags the colors red, white, and blue? The red and the blue symbolize the blood of the enemy you are about to slay, and it is as well to have some white cloth handy in case you wish to surrender.

Anthropology explains the origin of many nursery rhymes. Take the well-known,

Old Mother Hubbard  
Went to the cupboard  
To fetch her poor dog a bone.  
When she got there

<sup>4</sup> Hazlitt's "Dictionary of Faiths and Folklore".

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The cupboard was bare  
And so the poor dog had none.

Anthropology explains this emptiness of the cupboard by citing the old custom of burying an animal under the foundation of a building as a sacrifice to Mother Earth to placate her for disturbing her interior economy. Thus every house had its skeleton and from this in course of time arose the saying that every house had a skeleton in the cupboard. Now old Mother Hubbard believed with the whole country-side that there was a skeleton in her cupboard and therefore she fully expected to feed it to her dog. But of course there was no skeleton and so the poor dog had to go without his bone.

The more up-to-date anthropologists, however, are beginning to think that many explanations of origin are too fanciful and that it is wiser to

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adopt a more natural explanation whenever it fits the conditions and tallies with one's own immediate experience. In the case under consideration I would suggest that the reason for the absence of the bone in old Mother Hubbard's cupboard is simply that the dog had been there beforehand.

When you obtain a conclusion like this from immediate experience instead of from ideas remote in space and time, you call it *Adjacent Anthropology*.

Anthropology finds that once a custom is established it dies very hard indeed. For example most men continue to wind their watches at night although it would be much better to do it in the morning when they are perfectly sober, and thus avoid the reckless bursting of watch springs. But when watches were first invented they would only go for about twelve

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hours, if they went at all, and so perforce they had to be wound at night. Nor could they be used in the daytime because of their size, which was equal to that of a turnip. And the proof of that is that even to this day in many parts of Britain a large watch is scoffingly referred to as a "turnip".

Church bells too, which summoned the worshippers to church in clockless days, will no doubt keep on jangling till the crack of doom, although there are no worshippers so poor now-a-days as to be without a watch or clock. Some anthropologists maintain, however, that the true origin of church bells was not to summon the worshippers but to scare away the devil. It is a well-known practice with savages to kick up a great row with all sorts of noisy instruments to scare away evil spirits.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "The Golden Bough".

## CHAPTER XIX.

### Utility of Anthropology.

In Joshua VI, 20, it is written, "So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets, and it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat".

Now some anthropologists see in this an example of coercive magic practised by the priests, the exact process by which it was done being expurgated from the text because all magical rites had by this time fallen into great disrepute. Whenever the text which you quote does not properly bolster up your thesis, the wise anthropologist says that the text has been expurgated. A more rational explanation of the fall of the walls of

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Jericho is that it was a case of synchronism. For those whose musical education has been neglected synchronism is a hard thing to understand. It will perhaps be made clear by the following extract taken from a despatch of the *St. Louis Special* to the *New York Times*.

“Musicians and architects are agreed that the shattering of the glass skylights of Festival Hall at the World’s Fair was caused by the vibratory force from harsh notes played on the organ by some unskilled musician.”

Now the shattering of the glass skylights by the vibratory force from notes on the organ is a scientific fact. It is called synchronism. But in stating that an unskilled musician brought down the house by playing *harsh* notes, the aforesaid musicians and architects were laboring under a delusion. Neither an infant nor a



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blacksmith can play harsh notes on a well-tuned organ. When the stops are set the tone is always the same no matter who presses down the key or how it is pressed down. Harsh notes, had they been produced, would not have disturbed the skylight. It was pure, resonant tones with their full and regular vibrations that caused the glass to vibrate in sympathy and brought it down on the heads of the audience.

Now this principle of synchronism has only to be studied and the musician ought to be able to state in any given case just what note or notes will cause any particular object to vibrate. This applied science would be of inestimable value to mankind. High officials, like the President of the United States, who have to dislocate their arms shaking hands with *hoi polloi*, would give many dollars if they could obtain from a scien-

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tist the correct note for making their hand vibrate. At receptions all they would have to do would be to stand still and whistle the proper note. Synchronism would do the rest.

On a hot summer night you could fix a palm leaf at the head of your bed, whistle the sympathetic note and go to sleep lulled by the cooling Zephyr from the vibrating fan.

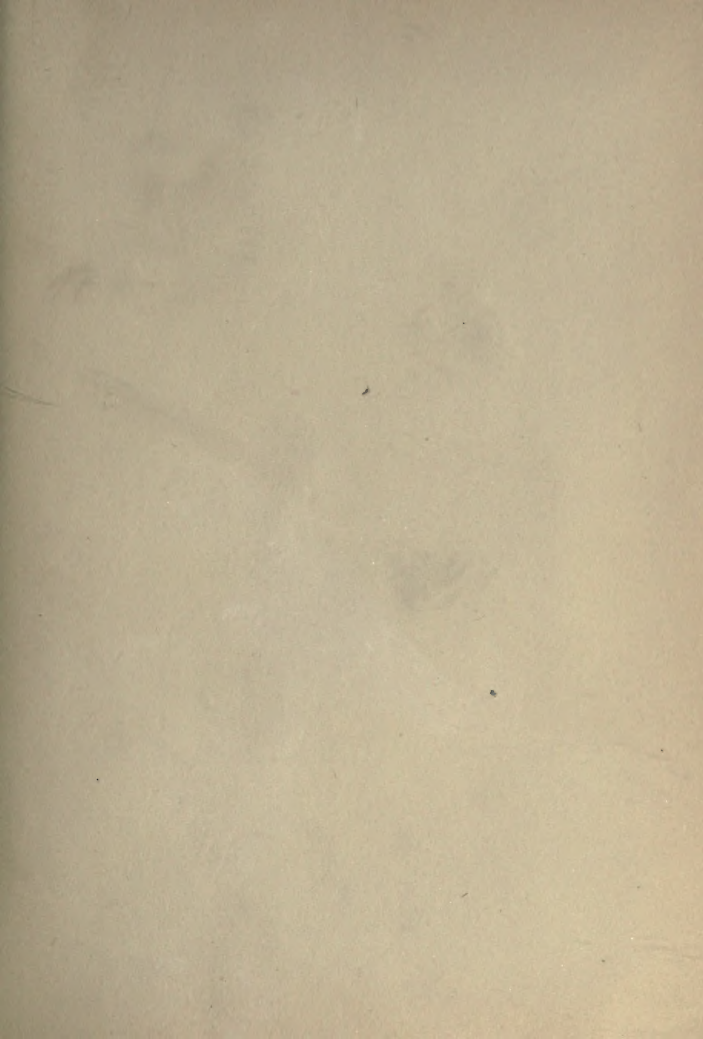
And when the science has become sufficiently developed scientists should be able to give us the note or notes that will shake men and walls and battleships like the glass on the roof of Festival Hall at the World's Fair. The horrors of war will be overcome. Carnage and mutilation will be eliminated from the battlefield. The infantry soldier will advance playing a penny whistle instead of firing a rifle, machine-gun squads will carry phonographs and huge organs on motor-trucks will take the place of

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artillery, all regulated to shake the life out of the enemy.

The curse of the military mind is its lack of brains. It is not beyond the imitative stage of the savage. One army introduces the machine-gun, or the aeroplane, or liquid fire, and the other replies with the same weapons. The nation that will gain the military supremacy in the next war is the nation that discards soldiers as such altogether and employ artistes in their stead. I shouldn't wonder if that nation were the United States of America, a nation which has had the good sense to make a college professor its Chief Executive.







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